On the Body and Blood of Our Lord

Ratramnus

The

Book of Ratramn

The Priest and Monk of Corbey

Commonly Called Bertram

On The

Body and Blood

Of

The Lord

OXFORD
John Henry Parker;
J. G. And F. Rivington, London.

1838

Preface.

The History of This Tract is curious, from the varied treatment it has met with at the hands of the Romanists, as well as the influence it has exercised in our own Church. It was undoubtedly written in the middle of the ninth century at the request of Charles the Bald, who reigned from the year of 840 to 877, to oppose the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which Paschasius about that time first propounded. Its author has gone under several names, Ratramn, Intramn, and Bertram.

The learned Cave in his Historia Litteraria, thus sums up the fate of This Tract: All who have taken their first lessons in Theology know, how plainly, how learnedly he treateth the subject of the Eucharist in his book concerning the Body and Blood of Christ, and how clearly he rejecteth the dogmas of Transubstantiation as it is explained in the Romanist Schools. Wherefore the Papists from their desire to banish this tract to Antieyra, or rather to Orcus itself, (for it has been stamped with the black mark of condemnation by the Censors of Trent, and Louvain, by Sixtus Senensis, Bellarmine, Genebrardm Possevin, Gregory of Valentia, Gretzer, etc) have attacked it with every instrument of hostility. Some endeavour to diminish the Author's reputation; others calumniate him as a heretic, desirous of change, as monk kicking against his superiors. The staid manners of the man, and his fame untouched through so many ages, clearly refute this. Others loudly exclaim that his work is corrupt and interpolated. Against this, the faith of so many ancient Manuscripts must be taken, and that of the Easter Homily by our own Ælfric, who flourished in the year 960, which is borrowed almost word for word from the tract of Ratramn. Lastly others would prove that John Erigena, and not Ratramn, is its author. What then? As if John Scotus were not his equal, both in age and learning. But in truth the candid confession of John Mabillon easily convicteth this party; for he confesseth, that he found the name of Ratramn at the beginning of an ancient Manuscript 800 years old, in the monastery of Lobez. Indeed, Antony Sanders made mention of this Manuscript long before in his Catalogue of the Belgian Libraries, part i. p. 303. And in very truth, men, in other respects grave and learned, work wondrous hard at trifles, when they undertake to prove, that Ratramn in this Tract favours the doctrine of the Romish Church, or, at least, does not oppose it;

from which, nevertheless, it is as far distant as the East is from the West. What can they produce worthy of so huge and promise? Let these new champions of

Transubstantiation, as far as I am concerned, go on with it; let them transform Ratramn into Paschasius himself, for I would as soon believe them to be one and the same person, as the Ratramn held on this point the same doctrine of Paschasius, and the Romish Church of the present day.

Bellarmine against all authority, and without a shadow of proof, asserts that Ratramn was the innovator, and Paschasius the defender of the Catholic doctrine, when the fact is the very reverse. In his account of Ecclesiastical writers, he only makes incidental mention of Ratramn under the head "Paschasius," in these words: "He [Paschasius] was the first author who wrote in a copious and systematic way on the truth of the Lord's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, against Bertram, who first brought it into doubt"

The Tract is now universally admitted to have been written by Ratramn, and in answer to Paschasius. The question of then remains, whether he is to be considered as holding or denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Here the Romanists themselves are divided; at one time condemning him, at another time claiming him as making with them. Bellarmine's opinion is clear from his own words above quoted. The Tract also stands in the Index of prohibited books, made by the Council of Trent, A. D. 1559, and is retained in most of the succeeding Indices. One published at Strasbourg, A. D. 1609, has a curious judgment given by the University of Douay, and approved by the Censors. This index is a reprint of a former Edition of 1571; from which Bishop Ridley's Biographer, in his account of Ratramn's Tract, gives the following version of the passage. "Although we care not greatly for this book of Bertram's, whether it be extant or no, yet because it is often printed, and read of many, and the heretics know by a catalogue of forbidden books that he was a Catholic Priest, and dear unto Charles the Great (i. e. the Bald), and because we comment upon other writers of the same age, and extenuate their errors oftentimes by a favourable construction of them, by the same reason we may allow Bertram, and acknowledge him; for there is nothing worthy of reprehension in him, setting aside a little obscurity in his style, and his ignorance in using some dark words and sentences, which, with marginal notes affixed, may manifest the true sense and meaning of the Author." Of this principle we find such instances as these; "invisible" is substituted for "visible," and "substance" explained by "accidents."

After the genuineness of the Tract was put beyond all doubt by the discovery of the Manuscripts, M. Boileau, doctor of the Sorbonne, published an exact transcript of the Lobez Manuscript, and at the same time in an excessively loose French translation, "has made," as Dr. Hopkins says, "not so much a translation as a conversion of Bertram." In the Appendix to the Edition of 1688, Dr. Hopkins fully exposes Dr. Boileau’s artifices. Whether Ratramn will bear the sense there put upon him may be seen from Cave's opinion above quoted, and the use which has been made of this Tract in our own Church, both before her infection with Romish errors and at the time she freed herself from them.

In the Appendix we have reprinted from Lisle Collection of Saxon Treatises, with one exception, mentioned page 63, the Saxon Homily of Ælfric, Abbot of St. Alban's and also of Malmesbury, who flourished about the year 960. Its agreement with the tract of Ratramn is not only doctrinal, but very often verbal, as will be seen by comparing the sections of Ratramn to which we have referred. It was set forth, together with the two Epistles of Ælfric, by Abp. Parker, with his own subscription, that of the Abp. of York and thirteen Bishops, under the title of "A Testimony of Antiquity, shewing the Ancient Faith of the Church of England, touching the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, here publicly preached, and also received in the Saxons time, above 700 years ago." This Sermon was appointed in the reign of the Saxons to be pronounced to the people before they should receive the Communion on Easter Day.*

To come to later times. This tract of Ratramn seems to have formed a link in the history of the English Church, connecting us as well at the Reformation, as in Saxon times, with the views of Primitive Antiquity.

The Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation was retained in our Church as embodied in the Mass book throughout the reign of Henry the VIII. Bp. Ridley was one of the first of our divines who returned to a sounder judgment on this point of doctrine. He passed the year 1545 in retirement at his vicarage of Hearne, whither he carried with him this Tract of Ratramn. He then first saw the unsoundness of the Romish Doctrine of Transubstantiation, without falling into the low views of the foreign reformers. This change of opinion he communicated to Abp. Cranmer about 1546; whereupon they both set to examine the subject with more than ordinary care, and the primitive and Catholic doctrine was accordingly embodied in the first reformed Communion Service of 1549. Bp. Ridley himself thus acknowledged his debt to Ratramn before the Commissioners of Oxford, A. D. 1555.

Here I would beg you Reverend Sirs, you Mr. Prolocutor, and you the other Commissioners, design to understand that I do rest not only on those things which heretofore I have written in my former responsions and confirmations, but that I have also for confirmation of my opinion whatever Bertram hath writ, a man learned and orthodox, and ever accounted Catholic for these 700 years until this our age. His Tract, whoever will read and weigh, considering the age of the writer, his learning, godliness, allegations of ancient Fathers, and his manifold and weighty arguments, I cannot but very much marvel, how he can with a good conscience, if he fear God, speak against him in this matter of the Eucharist. This man was the first that pulled me by the ear, and forced me from the common error of the Roman Church, to a more diligent search of scripture and Ecclesiastical writers on this matter: and these things I speak before God, Who knoweth that I lie not in what I say.

There are two old English translations in the Boleian, with the dates 1548 and 1549. There was a translation made in 1623 by Sir Humphrey Lynde, and reprinted in 1686. Dr. Hopkins, Canon of Worcester, published two editions of the text, with an English

translation; the first in 1686, the latter in 1688, after Dr. Boilaeu's edition appeared, with the Appendix before referred to.

Our first intention was merely to revise the translation of Dr. Hopkins; but as the work advanced, it seemed necessary to retranslate the Tract entirely.

H. W.
W. C. C.

Here Beginneth

The

Book of Ratramn

On The

Body and Blood

Of

The Lord

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

You have bidden me, O glorious Prince, to make known to your Majesty, what I think touching the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ. A command no less worthy of your magnificent and princely estate, than difficult for my poor ability. For what can be worthy of a Prince than to take care that he himself be Catholic in his judgment, concerning the sacred mysteries of Him, Who hath deigned to commit to him his kingly throne, and to endure not that his subjects should think diversely concerning the Body of Christ, in the which it is certain that the whole sum of Christian redemption doth consist?

For whilst some of the faithful say, that the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ, which is daily celebrated in the Church, is performed under no figure, or veil, but with the naked exhibition of the Truth itself; others testify, that these things are contained under the figure of a mystery, and that it is one thing, which appeareth to the bodily senses, and another, upon which faith gazeth. There is then clearly no small diversity of
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

judgment among them. And though the Apostle writeth to the faithful, that they should all think and speak the same thing, and that there should be no schism among them; yet by no small schism are they divided, who give utterance to such diverse opinions touching the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Wherefore your Royal Highness, being provoked with zeal for the fath, and with no easy mind pondering on these things, and being desirous that, as the apostle commandeth, all men should think and speak the same thing. Doth diligently search into this secret verity, that so you may recall to it them that are out of the way. Wherefore you do not disdain to ask the truth in this matter even from the most humble; for you well know that so great and secret a mystery cannot be acknowledged unless God reveal it, Who without respect of persons sheweth forth the light of his truth by whomsoever he chooseth.

Pleasant as it is to me to obey your command, yet no less difficult is it with my slender ability to dispute on a subject so far removed from human senses, and into which no one can penetrate except by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore, in submission to your Majesty's command, yet with entire confidence in his aid, of whom I am about to treat, I will strive to open what I think on this matter, in what words I can, not leaning to my own wit, but following the steps of the Holy Fathers.

~~~

Your excellent Majesty inquireth, whether the Body and Blood of Christ, which in the Church is taken by the mouth of the faithful, be made so in a mystery or in truth; that is, whether it containeth any hidden thing, which lieth open to the eye of faith alone; or whether without the veil of any mystery, the sight of gazeth on that Body outwardly, which the eye of the soul inwardly beholdeth, so that the whole matter standeth forth open and manifest. And, whether it be the very same Body which was born of Mary, suffered, died, and was buried, which rose again, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

Let us look closely into the first of these two questions, and let us define what figure is, and what truth, that we be not hundred by doubtful ambiguity, but that, keeping somewhat certain before our eyes, we may know whither we ought to direct the course of our reasoning.

Figure is a certain outshadowing, which exhibiteth what it meaneth under some sort of veil; for instance, when we would speak of the Word, we say Bread; as in the Lord's Prayer, we pray that God would give us our daily Bread. Or as Christ in the gospels saith, "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." Or when he calleth himself a vine, and his disciples the branches; saying, "I am the True Vine, and ye are the branches." All these passages express one thing, and hint at another.
~~~

But truth is the shewing forth of a plain matter, veiled under no shadowy images, but conveyed to us in clear, open, and (to speak more plainly yet) natural significations; as when we say that Christ was born of the Virgin, suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried. Nothing is here shadowed forth under the veil of figure, but truth of the matter is exhibited in the natural signification of the words; nor must aught else be understood than expressed. But in the former instances it is not so. For substantially Christ is not bread, nor is Christ a vine, nor are the apostles branches. So that in this case a figure is presented in the expression, but in the former truth, that is, the naked and open signification.

Now let us return to the subject, with a view to which this hath been said, namely, the Body and Blood of Christ. For if that mystery be performed under no figure, then it is not rightly called a mystery, since that cannot be called a mystery, in which there is nothing hid, nothing removed from our bodily senses, nothing concealed under any veil but that bread, which by the ministry of the priest is made the Body of Christ, sheweth one thing outwardly to man's senses, and proclaimeth another thing inwardly to the souls of the faithful. Outwardly, the form of bread, which it was before, is presented; but inwardly, a far different thing is signified, and that much more precious, much more excellent, for it is heavenly, for it is divine; that is Christ's Body is shewn forth, which is beheld, is taken, is eaten, not by the bodily senses, but by the gaze of the believing soul.

Likewise the wine, which by the Priest's consecration is made the sacrament of Christ's Blood, sheweth one thing outwardly, and inwardly containeth another. For what outwardly appeareth but the substance of wine? Taste it, there is the savour of wine: smell it, there is the scent of wine: behold it there is the colour of wine. But if thou dost consider it inwardly, then it is no longer the liquor of wine, but the liquor of the Blood of Christ, that to the souls of the believers savoureth when tasted, is recognized when beheld, is approved when smelt. Since no one can deny that this is so, it is plain, that Bread and wine are in a figure the Body and Blood of Christ. As to outward appearance, neither the nature of flesh is recognized in that bread, nor the fluid of blood in that wine; yet after the mystic consecration, they are no longer called bread or wine, but Christ's Body and Blood.

If nothing is here taken in figure, as some say, but all is seen in truth, then faith hath no operation here; since [in that case] nought is performed spiritually, but the whole, whatever is be, is received altogether corporally. In that faith, according to the apostle is "the evidence of things not seen," that is not of visible but of invisible substances, we shall [on their view] receive nothing according to faith, since thus, we pass judgment on it, whatever it be, by our bodily senses. And nothing is more absurd than to take mere bread for flesh, and to call mere wine blood. Nor will that be any longer a mystery, in which nothing secret, nothing hidden is contained.

And how shall that be called the Body of Christ, where no change is perceived to be made? For every change is either from not being to being or from being to not being, or

from one being to another. But in this sacrament, if it be considered simply and in truth, and nought else be believed than what is seen, we know of no change at all being made. For it hath not passed from not being to being, which passage holdeth in things produced, where the things had no former existence, but have, in order to their production, passed from not being into being. But here the bread and wine had real existence, before they passed into the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Nor is there any passage from being to not being, which passage holdeth in things which undergo decay and annihilation. For that which perisheth, once existed, nor can any thing undergo destruction, which hath never been. Now as the nature of the creature is perceived to remain in very truth as it was before, it is clear there is no change of this kind herein wrought.

Further, there is not here that change, which is from one kind of being to another, which we see in things that undergo change of quality, (for example when that which was before black is altered into white,) for we here detect no change in taste, colour, of smell. If then there is no change at all, it is the same which it was before. But in truth it is somewhat else, since the bread is made the Body, and the wine the Blood of Christ. Christ himself hath said “Take eat, this is my body.” Likewise speaking of the cup, he saith, “Take, drink, this is the Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you.” They therefore, who will take nothing figuratively, but will have the whole matter consist in simple truth, must be asked, in what respect that change takes place, by which the elements come to be, what they were not before, (namely, bread and wine,) but the Body and Blood of Christ? For according to the nature of the creatures, and their form as visible things, neither the bread nor wine have ought changed in them. And if they undergone no change at all, they are nought else than they were before.

Your Highness perceiveth, illustrious Prince, whither their opinion tendeth, who think thus: they deny that, which they are believed to affirm, and are convicted of overthrowing that, which they believe. They indeed faithfully confess the Body and Blood of Christ, and by so doing, without doubt they profess that the elements are not that same thing, which they were before; and if they are other than they were before, they have undergone some change. Since this cannot be denied, let them say in what respect they are changed. For no bodily change can be seen in them. They must therefore confess, either that they are changed in respect of something else than their corporeal substance, and that therefore they are not what in truth they seem to be, but somewhat else, which they evidently are not in their proper essence: or, if they will not acknowledge this, they are forced to deny that they are the Body and Blood of Christ, which is impious, not only to say, but even to think.

Yet because they do confess that they are the Body and Blood of Christ, and that they could not be so, but by a change for the better; and since this change is not corporally but spiritually wrought, is followeth, that we must acknowledge it to be done in a figure, since under the veil of corporeal bread and corporeal wine, the spiritual Body the

spiritual Blood of Christ do exist. Not that two things co-exist diverse between themselves, namely body and spirit, but one and the same thing hath in one respect the nature of bread and wine, in another is the Body and Blood of Christ. As far as they are corporally handled, they are in their nature, corporeal creatures, but in their power, and as they spiritually made, they are the mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Let us consider the font of Holy Baptism, which is styled, not without reason, the Fountain of Life, because it forms afresh those who descend into it with the newness of a better life, and gives back alive to righteousness those who were dead in sin. Hath it this power, in that it is, as we see it, the element of water? Unless it received a sanctifying grace, it could by no means wash away the stain of sin. Unless it possessed a life-giving power, it could in no sort give life to those who are dead, I mean not in the flesh but in soul. For in that font, if we have respect to that alone, which meeteth the bodily senses, we see the mere element of water subject to corruption, and able to wash the body only. But the power of the Holy Ghost is added thereunto by the consecration of the Priest; and it is made efficacious to wash not the body only, but the soul too, and by its spiritual virtue to remove spiritual stains.

See how in one and the same element two things are contained, the one contrary to the other, that which is subject to corruption giving incorruption, that which hath not life conveying life. We know then that in this font there is that, which corporeal sense can touch, and therefore subject to change and corruption; and again there is that, which faith only can behold, and therefore neither corruptible nor mortal. If you ask what washeth the body outwardly, it is the element, but if you ponder on that which purgeth the inward parts, it is a quickening power, a sanctifying power, a power of immortality. Wherefore in its proper nature it is a corruptible fluid, but in a mystery it is a healing power.

So too the Body and Blood of Christ, considered outwardly, are creatures subject to change and corruption. But if you weigh the power of the mystery, they are life, giving immortality to such as partake thereof. They are then not the same, as they are seen, and as they are believed; according to that they are seen, they feed a corruptible body, themselves corruptible; according to that they are believed, they feed our souls, which shall live forever, themselves immortal.

The apostle too, writing to the Corinthians, saith, "Know ye not, that all our fathers were under the could, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." We observe that the sea and the could bore the likeness of Baptism, and that the Fathers of the Old Testament were baptized in them, that is, in the cloud, and in the sea. Could then the sea, in respect of what it was to outward sight, an element, have the power of Baptism? Or could the cloud in respect of what it was to outward sight, a condensation of thick air, have power to sanctify the people? Yet we

dare not say that the Apostle, who spake in Christ, did not with truth affirm that our Fathers were baptized in the cloud, and in the sea.

And though that baptism bore not the form of Baptism of Christ, which at this day is performed in the Church, yet not sane person will dare deny that of a truth it was baptism, and that in it our Fathers were baptized, unless he madly presume to contradict the words of the Apostle. Wherefore both the sea and the cloud conveyed the cleansing of sanctification, not in respect of their bodily substance, but in respect of that, which they inwardly contained, the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. For in them there was both a visible form, apparent to the bodily senses, not in image, but in truth; and also a spiritual power, which shone forth within, discernible not by the eye of the flesh, but of the soul.

In like sort the manna, which was given to the people of heaven, and the water, which flowed from the rock, had a corporeal existence, and were meat and drink for the bodies of the people; yet the apostle calleth that manna and that water spiritual meat and spiritual drink. How so? because in those corporeal substances the spiritual power of the Word was contained, which was meat and drink to the souls rather than the bodies of believers. And although that meat and that drink foreshewed the mystery of the Body and Bllod of Christ, Who was to come which the church now celebrates, yet St. Paul affirmeth that our fathers did eat the same spiritual meat and drink the same spiritual drink.

Perchance you ask, what same? the very same, which at this day the company of the faithful eateth and drinketh in the Church. For we may not think them diverse, since one and the same Christ gave His own Flesh for food, and His own Blood for drink, to that people, who, in the desert, were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, and now in the Church feedeth the congregation of the faithful of the Bread of His Body, and giveth them to drink of the stream of His Blood.

The Apostle intending to intimate thus much, after saying our fathers ate the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink, immediately addeth, "For they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." To the end we might understand, that in the wilderness the same Christ was in the spiritual Rock, and gave the stream of His Blood to the people. Who afterwards exhibited in our age His Body taken of the Virgin, and hanged upon the cross, for the salvation of believers, and shed from it the stream of His Blood, to the end we might not only be redeemed by it, but also have it for our drink.

In very deed this is wonderful, since we cannot comprehend its depth, nor weigh its value. He had not as yet assumed man’s nature; He had not as yet tasted death for the salvation of the world; He had not as yet redeemed us with His Blood; and still our Fathers in the desert, by means of that spiritual meat, and that invisible drink, did eat His Body, and drink His Blood, as the Apostle testifieth when he saith, "Our Fathers ate the same spiritual meat, and "drank the same spiritual drink." Here we must not enquire

how that could be done, but must believe that it was done. For He who now in the Church by His Almighty power spiritually changeth bread and wine into the Flesh of His Body, and the stream of His own Blood, at that time too wrought invisibly, so that the manna, which was given from heaven, and the water, which flowed from the Rock, became His Body and His Blood.

This Davis understood and testified in the Holy Ghost, saying, "Man did eat Angels' food." For it were a fond thing to suppose that the corporeal manna, which was given to the Fathers, feedeth the host of heaven, or that they use such diet, who are satisfied with the feast of the Divine Word. Of a truth the Psalmist, or rather the Holy Ghost speaking in the Psalmist, teacheth us, both what our Fathers received in that heavenly manna, and what the faithful ought to believe in the mystery of Christ's Body. In either surely is Christ signified, who feedeth the souls of believers, and is Angels' food. This too He doth and is, not by bodily taste, nor by becoming bodily food, but by the power of the spiritual Word.

We know also on the testimony of the Evangelist, that our Lord Jesus Christ, before He suffered, "took bread, and when He had given thanks. He gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is My Body, which is given for you: do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you." We see that, though Christ had not yet suffered. He still, even then, wrought the mystery of His Body and Blood.

For sure am I, no believer doubteth that the bread which He gave to His disciples, saying, "This is My Body which is given for you." was made the Body of Christ; or that the cup of which He also said, "This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you," contained the Blood of Christ. As then, a little before His passion. He was able to change the substance of bread and the creature of wine, into His own Body, which was to suffer, and into His Blood, which was afterward to be shed; so too in the desert he had power to change the manna and the water from the rock, into His own Flesh and Blood, though long time was to press ere that Flesh was to hang on the cross for us, or that Blood to be shed for our cleansing.

Here too we must consider, His words are to be taken, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye shall not have life in you."

He doth not say that His Flesh, which hung on the cross, should be cut in pieces, and eaten by His disciples, or that His Blood, which He was to shed for the redemption of the world, should be given to His disciples to drink. It had been an horrible crime for His disciples to drink His Blood, or to eat His Flesh, as the unbelieving Jews then understood Him.

Wherefore in the words following, He saith to his disciples, who received His words not in unbelief but in faith, though they did not fully see, how those words were to be understood, "Doth this offend you? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" as though he said, "Think not that My Flesh is to be corporally

eaten, or My Blood corporally drunk by you, that it is divided, or to be hereafter divided into parts, for after My resurrection ye shall see Me ascend into Heaven with the fulness of My entire Body, and Blood. Then shall ye understand that My Flesh is not to be eaten by believers, as the faithless suppose, but that bread and wine truly, yet mystically changed into the substance of My Body and Blood, is to be received by them."
And immediately He addeth, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." He saith that the flesh profiteth nothing as those unbelievers understood it, but otherwise it giveth life, as it is mystically received by the faithful. And why so? He Himself declareth, saying, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." Wherefore in this mystery of the Body and Blood, it is the spiritual working that giveth life, without which working these mysteries avail nothing; they may feed the body, but cannot feed the soul.
Here ariseth that question, which very many propose when they say, that these things are done, not in figure, but in truth in speaking thus, they are proved to contradict the writings of the Holy Fathers.
St. Augustine, a chief doctor of the Church, in his third book of Christian Doctrine, thus writeth: 'Except ye eat, (saith the Saviour) the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye shall not have life in you.' He seemeth to command a flagitious crime. His words therefore are in a figure, bidding us communicate in the Lord's passion, and faithfully store up in our memory, that His Flesh was crucified and wounded for us.
We see this doctor saith, that the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ is celebrated by the faithful under a figure; for carnally to receive His Body and Blood is not, he saith, an act of religion, but a crime. So were they minded, who in the Gospel took our Saviour's words not spiritually but carnally, who departed from Him, and followed Him no more.
The same Father in his Epistle to Boniface the bishop, among other things, thus writeth; "We often speak in this manner, when the Pasch draweth nigh, To-morrow or the next day is the Lord's Passion, though He suffered so many years ago, and that but once for all. Likewise we say on the Lord's day, On this day the Lord rose again, though so many years have passed since He rose. Why then is none so foolish, as to charge us with falsehood for so speaking? It is because we name the days after their likeness to those, on which the things themselves were done; whence that is called the day of His resurrection, which is not so indeed, but like it in the revolution of time: and by reason of the celebration of the Sacrament, that is said to be done on this very day, which not on this day, but in former time was done. Was not Christ once sacrificed in His own Person? and yet in the Sacrament He is offered up for the people, not only during all the Paschal solemnity, but every day. Wherefore he lieth not, who, when questioned, answereth that Christ is now sacrificed. For if Sacraments had not some resemblance to those things, of which they are the Sacraments, they would not be Sacraments at all. But from this resemblance they oft times take the names of the things themselves. As then after a certain sort of Sacrament of the Body of Christ is the Body of Christ, and the

Sacrament of the Blood of Christ, the Blood of Christ, so too the Sacrament of the faith is the faith.

We see St. Augustine saith, that Sacraments are one thing, and the things of which they are Sacraments another. For the Body, in which Christ suffered, and the Blood, which flowed from His side, are the things themselves; whilst the mysteries of these things are the Sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ, which are celebrated in memory of the Lord's passion, not only during the whole Paschal solemnity in every year, but also every day throughout the year.

And although the Body of Christ, in which He once suffered, is one, and His Blood, which was shed for the salvation of the world, is one, yet the Sacraments of these things have assumed the names of the things themselves, so as to be called the Body and Blood of Christ; and this, from their likeness to the things, which they shadow forth; even as the Passion and the Resurrection, which are celebrated every year, are so called, though He suffered and rose again in His own Person but once, nor can those days now be recalled, since they have passed away. Yet the days, on which the Passion or Resurrection of the Lord is commemorated, are so called in that they have resemblance to those days, on which the Saviour once suffered and rose again. Whence we say, To-day or tomorrow or the next day in the Passion or the Resurrection of the Lord, though the very days on which these things were done have for many years passed away. So we may say, The Lord is sacrificed, when the Sacrament of His passion if celebrated, though He were but once sacrificed in His own Person for the salvation of the world, as the Apostle saith, "Christ hath suffered for us, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps." Not that He suffereth in His own Body every day, that He did once, but He hath left us an example, which is daily presented to believers in the mystery of the Lord's Body and Blood; so that whoso approacheth thereto, may know that he must have fellowship with Him in His sufferings, the image whereof he waiteth for in these sacred mysteries, according to that saying of Wisdom, "Thou hast drawn near to the table of a mighty one, consider diligently what is set before thee, knowing that thou thyself must prepare the like." To dawn near to a mighty one's table, is to become a partaker of the Lord's offering. To consider what is set before us, is to discern the Lord's Body and Blood. Of which whoso partaketh, let him consider that he ought to prepare like things, that he may imitate Him by fellowship in His death, the memory whereof he confesseth, not by believing only, but also by tasting.

So St. Paul to the Hebrews: For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this the Lord Jesus Christ did once, when He "offered up Himself." What He did once, He daily repeateth; He once offered Himself for the sins of the people, yet the name oblation is every day celebrated by the faithful, but in a mystery; so that what

the Lord Jesus Christ by once offering Himself fully accomplished, this in remembrance of His passion, is every day performed by the celebration of the mysteries.
Yet it is not false to say that in those mysteries the Lord is sacrificed, or suffers, since they have a likeness to that death and passion, the representations of which they are. Whence they are styled the Lord’s Body and the Lord’s Blood, for they take the name of those things, of which they are the Sacraments. Hence St. Isidore, in his book of Etymologies, speaketh thus: “Sacrificium" sacrifice is so called from sacrumfactum, a thing made sacred, because it is consecrated by mystical prayer, in remembrance of the Lord's passion on our behalf. Whence by His command, we call that the Body and Blood of Christ, which, though made of the fruits of the earth, is sanctified, and becomes a Sacrament by the invisible operation of the Spirit of God. The Sacrament of this bread and cup the Greeks call Eucharist, which the Latins interpret Bona Gratia, Good grace. And what can be better than the Body and Blood of Christ? [Now the bread and wine are for cause compared to the Lord's Body and Blood, because as the visible substance of this bread and wine doth nourish and cheer the outward man, so the Word of God, which is the living Bread, doth refresh the souls of the faithful by the participation of Himself"]
This Catholic doctor also teacheth, that this holy mystery of our Lord's passion is to be celebrated in memory of the Lord's passion on our behalf. By so saying, he shews that the Lord's passion was once accomplished, but that the memory of it is represented in sacred and solemn rites.
So that the bread which is offered, though taken from the fruits of the earth, is by consecration changed into Christ's Body, and the wine, though it hath flowed from the Vine, yet by the consecration in this divine mystery is made the Blood of Christ, not indeed visibly, but, as this doctor saith, by the invisible operation of the Spirit of God. Whence they are called the Body and Blood of Christ, because they are received not as what they outwardly appear, but as they are made inwardly by the operation of the Spirit of God. And as through this invisible power they have a nature far different from that which outwardly appeareth, he maketh a distinction, saying, that bread and wine are for this cause compared to the Lord’s Body and Blood; because as the visible substance of bread and wine doth nourish and make cheerful the outward man, so the Word of God, which is the living Bread, doth refresh the souls of the faithful by the participation of Himself.
Now in saying this, he most plainly confesseth, that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, whatever is outwardly received, is fitted from the refreshing of the body. But the Word of God, which is the invisible Bread, and existeth invisibly in that Sacrament, doth, by the participation of Himself, invisibly feed the souls of the faithful with a quickening virtue.
Hence too, the same doctor saith, "There is a Sacrament in the celebration of any thing, when it is so performed, that it be understood to signify somewhat, which must be

spiritually taken." By these words he sheweth that every Sacrament in divine matters containeth within itself some secret thing, and that it is one thing, which appeareth to the outward eye, whilst it is another, which must be taken on faith and not on sight. Immediately after he sheweth what Sacraments the faithful ought to celebrate. "The Sacraments are Baptism and Chrism, the Body and the Blood. These are called Sacraments, because under the covering of bodily things the power of God secretly worketh the salvation, which lieth in them. Whence from their hidden and sacred virtues they are called Sacraments." He afterward saith, "It is called in Greek, μυστήριον, a mystery, because it hath a secret and hidden dispensation."

What are we hence taught, save that the Body and Blood of the Lord are styled mysteries, because they have a secret and hidden dispensation; or, in other words, that it is one thing, which they outwardly shew, and another, which they inwardly and invisibly do work.

For this reason too they are called Sacraments, because under the covering of bodily things, the power of God doth secretly dispense salvation to the faithful recipient.

From all that we have heretofore said, it hath been proved, that the Body and Blood of Christ, which in the Church are received by the mouths of the faithful, are figures in respect of their visible nature. But in respect of their invisible substance, that is, the power of the Word of God, they are truly the Body and Blood of Christ. Wherefore as far as they are visible creatures, they feed the body, but in virtue of a more powerful substance, they both feed and sanctify the souls of the faithful.

Now we must examine the second question proposed, and see, whether the self same Body, which was born of Mary, which suffered, died, and was buried, and which sitteth at the right hand of the Father, be that, which daily in the Church is received by the mouths of the faithful in the mystery of the Sacrament.

Let us enquire what is the judgment of St. Ambrose on this point. He saith in his first book of the Sacraments, "Of a truth it is marvelous that God should rain down manna on our Fathers, and feed them from day to day with heavenly food. Whence it is said, 'Man did eat Angels' food. Yet all they who ate the bread, perished in the wilderness. But that food, which thou receivest, that living Bread, which came down from heaven, ministereth in a hidden way the substance of everlasting life, and whoso eateth of this Bread, shall never die, and this is the Body of Christ."

See in what sense this doctor saith that the Body of Christ is that food, which the faithful receive in the Church; he saith, "That living Bread which came down from heaven, ministereth in a hidden way the substance of everlasting life." Doth it, as it is seen, and corporally taken, and pressed by the teeth, and swallowed by the throat, and received into the belly, doth it so minister the substance of everlasting life? In that respect, it nourisheth only the flesh which shall die, and ministereth no incorruption, not can we truly say of it, "Whoso eateth of this shall never die." For that which the body receiveth, is corruptible, nor can it secure to the body, that it should never die, since that which is

subject to corruption, cannot give everlasting life. There is then in the Bread a life, which appeareth not to the bodily eye, but is seen by the eye of faith, which is the living Bread, that came down from heaven, and of which it may with truth be said "Whoso eateth of this, shall never die;" and, "This is the Body of Christ."

And afterward, speaking of the almighty power of Christ, he saith, "Can not the word of Christ therefore, which from nothing could make that which was not, change those things which are, into that which they were not? For is it not a greater work to produce new things, than to change the nature of things that are?"

St. Ambrose saith, that in the mystery of the Blood and Body of Christ a change is made, and that a wondrous change, because divine, and ineffable, because incomprehensible. Let them who will take nothing here according to any hidden virtue, but will weigh every thing as it outwardly appeareth, let them say, in what respect the change is here made? For in respect of the substance of the creatures, they are after consecration what they were before. Bread and wine they were before, and after consecration they are seen to remain of the same nature. So that a change hath inwardly been wrought by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, and this is that which faith gazeth upon, this is what which feedeth the soul, this is that which ministereth the substance of eternal life.

Afterward he addeth, "Why dost thou here require the order of nature in the Body of Christ, when the Lord Jesus Himself was born of the Virgin, beside the order of nature?" Now perhaps some one who heareth this may rise up and say, 'That which we see is the Body of Christ, and that which we drink is His Blood; yet we must not enquire how it is so made, but stedfastly hold that it doth so become. Thou seemest indeed to think aright, yet if thou dost diligently consider the force of thy words, thou dost indeed faithfully believe that it is the Body and Blood of Christ, (for if it were an object of sight, thou wouldest say, c 'I see,' and not, believe it to be the Body and Blood of Christ,') but now since it is faith, that beholdeth the whole matter, whatever it be, and the eye of the flesh perceiveth nought, thou must understand that what we look upon is the Body and Blood of Christ not in nature, but in power. Wherefore [St. Ambrose] saith, 'we must not here look for the order of nature, but must adore the power of Christ, which changeth whatsoever He willeth, how He willeth, into what He willeth; which createth what was not, and when created, changeth it into what is was not before,' The same author addeth, It was surely the true Flesh of Christ which was crucified, which was buried; therefore this is truly the Sacrament of His Flesh. The Lord Jesus Himself proclaims, 'This is my Body.'"

How carefully, how warily is this distinction drawn! Of the Flesh of Christ, which was crucified, which was buried, that is, in respect of which Christ was crucified, and buried, he saith, "This was surely the true Flesh of Christ" but of that, which is received in the Sacrament, he declareth, "Therefore this is truly the Sacrament of that Flesh." Here he distinguisheth between the Sacrament of the Flesh, and the Flesh itself; inasmuch as he

saith, that He was crucified and buried in that true Flesh, which He took of the Virgin; but that the mystery, which is now performed in the Church, is the Sacrament of the true Flesh, in the which He was crucified. Here He openly teacheth the faithful, that the Flesh, in which Christ was crucified and buried, is no mystery, but true and natural; while the Flesh, which now in a mystery containeth the similitude of the former, is not Flesh in its nature, but in a Sacrament. For in its nature it is bread, but sacramentally it is the true Body of Christ, as the Lord Jesus Himself declareth, “This is My Body.”

Also below [he addeth,] "The Holy Ghost by the mouth of the prophet hath in another place declared to thee what we eat and what we drink, when He saith, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.' Doth that bread when corporally tasted, or that wine when corporally drunk, shew how good that Lord is? All the taste it hath is corporeal, and pleaseth the palate. What? is to taste the Lord, to perceive ought corporeal? Wherefore he inviteth us to try the flavour of that which is spiritually tasted, he inviteth us in that drink and that bread to hold no corporeal notion, but to understand the whole spiritually, since the Lord is a Spirit, and blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.

And afterward, "Christ is in that Sacrament, because it is the Body of Christ. Wherefore it is not corporeal, but spiritual food." What can be plainer? what more manifest? what more divine? For he saith, "Christ is in that Sacrament.” He saith not. That bread and that wine is Christ; did he say this, he would declare that Christ was mortal and subject to corruption, (which God forbid.) For whatsoever is in that food the object either of corporeal sight or taste, is of a surety subject to corruption.

He addeth, "Because it is the Body of Christ." Here you will start up and say, See he openly confesseth that the bread and the wine are the Body [and Blood] of Christ. But mark how he concludeth, "Wherefore it is not corporeal, but spiritual food." Do not then apply your bodily senses; they can discern nought here. Of a truth it is the Body of Christ, yet not His corporeal, but His spiritual Body; it is the Blood of Christ, yet not His corporeal, but His spiritual Blood. Nought then is to be understood here corporally, but all spiritually. It is the Body of Christ, yet not corporally; it is the Blood of Christ, yet not corporally.

After he addeth, "Hence the Apostle, when speaking of its type, saith, 'Our Fathers ate spiritual meat, and drank spiritual drink.' For the Body of God is a spiritual Body, the Body of Christ is the Body of a divine Spirit; for Christ is a Spirit, as we read in the Book of Lamentations, 'Christ the Lord is the Spirit before our face.'"

Most clearly hath he taught us, how we ought to understand the mystery of Christ's Body and Blood. For after saying, "Our Fathers ate spiritual meat, and drank spiritual drink," (where no one doubteth that the manna they ate, and the water they drank, were corporeal,) he goeth on to define in what sense that mystery, which is performed in the Church, is the Body of Christ. He saith "God's Body is a spiritual Body." Of a truth Christ is God, and the Body, which He took of the Virgin Mary, which suffered, was buried, and

rose again, was a real Body, that is, the Body which ever remained the object of sight and touch. Whilst that Body, which is called the mystery of God, is not corporeal, but spiritual; and if spiritual, then an object neither of sight, nor touch. Wherefore St. Ambrose goeth on to say, "The Body of Christ, is the Body of a divine Spirit." Now a divine Spirit in its proper essence is nought corporeal, nought corruptible, nought tangible. But this Body, which is celebrated in the Church, is in respect of its visible nature, both corruptible and tangible.

How then is it called the Body of a divine Spirit? Of a truth, as it is spiritual, that is, as it doth subsist, being invisible, impalpable, and there incorruptible.

Whence in the following words, "because Christ is a Spirit, as we read “Christ the Lord is the Spirit before our face;” he openly sheweth in what respect it is held to be the Body of Christ; namely, as the Spirit of Christ is therein, that is, the power of the divine Word, which doth not feed only, but also purge the soul.

Wherefore the same author goeth on to say, “Lastly, that food strengtheneth our heart, and that drink maketh glad the heart of man, as the Prophet testifieth.” Doth then corporeal food strengthen, and corporeal drink make glad the heart of man? No. But to shew of what meat and drink he is speaking, he significantly adds, that meat and that drink. What is that meat and that drink? Of a truth it is the Body of Christ, the Body of a divine Spirit, and (that he may impress this more clearly upon us) Christ the Spirit, of whom Scripture saith, “Christ the Lord is the Spirit before our face.” By all which it is clearly shewn, that nothing should be understood corporally in that food, and that drink, but all should be spiritually taken.

For the soul, which is meant by the heart of man in this place, is not fed by corporeal meat, or corporeal drink, but is nourished by the Word of God, and groweth thereby. Which the same doctor affirmeth yet more clearly in his fifth book of the Sacraments, where he saith, “It is not that bread which goeth into the body, but that Bread of eternal life, which in a hidden manner doth minister substance to our soul.”

The subsequent part of the passage most clearly sheweth, that St. Ambrose spoke thus, not of common bread, but of the Bread of the Body of Christ. For he is speaking of that daily Bread for which the faithful pray.

And he therefore addeth, “If it is your daily Bread, why do you receive it but once a year, as the Greeks in the East are wont to do. Receive then daily that which daily may profit, and live so, that day by day you may be worthy to receive.” It is clear then of what Bread he is speaking; namely, of the Bread of the Body of Christ, which supporteth the substance of our soul, not by that, which passeth into the body, but by that, which is the Bread of everlasting life.

By the authority of this most learned man, we are taught that the difference is wide between the Body, in which Christ suffered, and the Blood, which when hanging on the cross He shed from His side, and that Body, which in the mystery of Christ's passion is daily celebrated by the faithful; and that Blood, which is taken by the mouths of the

faithful, that to them it may be the mystery of that Blood, by which the whole world was redeemed. For that bread and that drink are not the Body and Blood of Christ in respect of what meeteth the eye, but as they spiritually minister in a hidden way the substance of life. But the Body, in which Christ once suffered, bore no other appearance than that in which it really subsisted. It was that, which truly was seen, was touched, was crucified, was buried. In like sort the Blood, which flowed from His side, did not appear one thing outwardly, and veil another thing inwardly; true blood flowed from a true Body; but now the blood of Christ which the faithful drink, and His Body, which they eat, are one thing in nature, and another in signification. They are one thing as they feed the body with corporeal food, and another thing, as they satisfy the soul with the substance of everlasting life.

Of which matter St. Jerome in his commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, writeth thus: "The Blood of Christ, and the Flesh of Christ, are taken in two senses. They are either that spiritual and divine Flesh [and Blood,] of which He Himself saith, 'My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed;' or the Flesh, which crucified, and the Blood, which was poured out by the soldier's spear."

The difference is not small with which this doctor distinguisheth concerning the Body and Blood of Christ. For whilst he saith that the Body and Blood of Christ, which are daily taken by the faithful are spiritual; while the Flesh, which was crucified, and the Blood, which was poured out by the soldier’s spear, are not said to be spiritual, or divine; openly doth he insinuate, that these two differ from one another no less than things corporeal and spiritual, visible and invisible, divine and human. And, because they differ, they are not the same; but the spiritual Bread, which is taken by the mouths of the faithful, and the spiritual Blood, which is daily presented to be drunk by believers, differ from the Flesh, which was crucified, and the Blood, which was poured out by the soldier’s spear, as the testimony of this author sheweth ; therefore they are not the same.

For that Flesh, which was crucified, was made of the Virgin’s flesh, bound together by bones and sinews, and marked out by the lines of human members, and animated with the breath of a reasonable soul, for its own proper life, and befitting motions. But, on the other hand, that spiritual Flesh, which spiritually feedeth the company of the faithful, as to the form which it outwardly beareth, is made of grains of corn by the baker’s hand, is bound together by no sinews or bones, is not parted into various members, is animated by no reasonable substance, hath no power to exercise any motions of its own.

For whatsoever therein giveth us the substance of life, in its power is spiritual, in its efficacy invisible, in its virtue divine. It is far different, as to its outward appearance, and as to that, which in the mystery is believed. Moreover, the Flesh of Christ, which was crucified, had no other outward show than what it inwardly was, insomuch as it was the very flesh of a very man, a true body consisting in the nature of a true body.

It is further to be considered that in that Bread; not the Body of Christ the people alone is figured, but also that of the people who believe in Him. Wherefore it is made of many grains of corn, as the Body of faithful people is made up of many, that believe through the word of Christ.

For which reason, as that Bread is taken to be the Body of Christ in a mystery, so likewise are the members of the people that believe in Christ signified in a mystery. And as that Bread is called the Body of believers not corporally, but spiritually; so also we must understand the Body of Christ not corporally, but spiritually.

So too, with the wine, which is called the Blood of Christ, water is ordered to be mixed, nor is the one allowed to be offered without the other; because, as the head cannot be without the body, nor the body without the head, so neither can the people be without Christ, nor Christ without the people. Moreover, 'the water in that [part of the] Sacrament beareth the image of the people.' If therefore that wine, when consecrated by the office of the Minister, is corporally changed into the Blood of Christ, the water also, which is mixed with it, must necessarily be corporally changed into the blood of the faithful people. For where the consecration is one, there followeth also one operation ; and where the cause is the same, the mystery which followeth is the. same also. But we see no change made in the water, as to bodily substance; and therefore, there is no corporeal change in the wine. Whatever in the water signifieth the people of Christ, is taken spiritually; whatever therefore in the wine representeth the Blood of Christ, must be taken spiritually too.

Again, things that differ from each other, are not the same. The Body of Christ, which died, which rose again, and being made immortal "dieth no more, nor hath death any more dominion over Him;" that Body is eternal, and no longer subject to suffering. But the Body, which is celebrated in the Church, is temporal, not eternal; corruptible, not incorruptible. They differ then from each other, and therefore are not the same. Now if they be not the same, how are they said to be the very Body and very Blood of Christ? For if it be the Body of Christ, and if it be truly said that it is the Body of Christ; then it is in verity the Body of Christ; and if it be in verity the Body of Christ, then it is the incorruptible and impassible, and therefore eternal, Body of Christ. And therefore, this Body of Christ, which is celebrated in the Church, must be incorruptible and eternal. But no one can deny that that thing is corrupted, which is broken into parts and distributed to be taken; which is ground by the teeth, and passeth into the body. But in truth that which is presented outwardly, is one thing, and that which is by faith believed, another; that which appertaineth to the bodily senses, is corruptible, but that which faith believeth, is incorruptible. That therefore which outwardly appeareth, is not the thing itself, but its image; but that which is perceived and understood by the soul, is the very thing itself.

Whence St. Augustine in his exposition of St. John’s Gospel, when treating of the Body and Blood of Christ, saith thus; “Moses ate manna, and Aaron ate, and Phinees ate,

and many more there, who pleased God, and died not. Wherefore? Because they spiritually understood that visible food, they were spiritually an hungred, they spiritually tasted, that spiritually they might be satisfied. For we too at this day receive visible food; yet the Sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the Sacrament another." The same Father addeth; "This is the Bread which came down from heaven, this Bread the manna, this Bread the altar of God signified. Those things were Sacraments, differing in signs, yet the same in the thing signified. Listen to the Apostle Paul; 'For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, how that all our Fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat:' that is to say, the same spiritually, for corporally they were diverse; they ate manna, and we eat another meat; yet spiritually they ate the same as we." He addeth, "'and did all drink the same spiritual drink.' They drank one, we another, diverse only in outward show, which yet in spiritual power signified this very same thing. For how did they drink of the same drink? 'They drank,' he saith, 'of the spiritual Rock, which followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' Thence had they meat, whence they had drink. In figure the Rock was Christ, but the true Christ was in the Word and in Flesh."

Again (it is written,) "This is the Bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." But this hath reference to the virtue of the Sacrament, not to the visible part of the Sacrament; to him, who eateth inwardly, not outwardly; who feedeth on it in his heart, not who presseth it with his teeth.

Again he introduceth our Saviour's words, when in a following passage he speaketh thus speaketh thus, "'Doth this offend you that I said, I give My Flesh to you to eat, and My Blood to drink? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?' What meaneth this? He here resolveth that, which troubled them, He here layeth open that, at which they were offended. For they thought He would give them His own Body; whilst " He said that He was about to ascend into Heaven whole and entire. When ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before, ye shall then at least see of a surety, that He giveth not His Body, in the way in which ye think ; then at least shall ye of a surety understand, that His grace is not consumed by the teeth. And He saith, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.'"

Again he addeth after some interval, "'If any man' (saith the Apostle) 'hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' 'It is the Spirit therefore which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.' What meaneth they are Spirit and they are Life? "They are to be understood spiritually. Dost thou understand them spiritually? They are Spirit and they are Life. Dost thou understand them carnally? Even then they are Spirit and they are Life, but not to thee." By the authority of this doctor, when treating of our Lord's words concerning the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, we are manifestly taught, that these words of our Lord are to be understood spiritually, not carnally. As He saith Himself, "The words that I

speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life;” namely, the words which concern the eating of His Flesh and the drinking of His Blood. For He spake of that, at which His disciples were offended. In order then that they might not be offended, our divine Master recalled them from the flesh to the spirit, from the objects of bodily sight to the understanding of things invisible.

We see then, that that food of the Lord’s Body, and that drink of His Blood, subsist truly as His Body, and truly as His Blood, after a certain sort; namely, in that they are Spirit and Life.

Again: things which are the same, are comprehended under one definition. Of the true Body of Christ it is said, that He is very God, and very Man: God, begotten of God the Father before the worlds; Man, born of the Virgin Mary in the end of the world. But since this cannot be said of the Body of Christ, which in the Church is mystically celebrated, we know that it is the Body of Christ after a certain manner, the manner namely of figure and image, so that the thing itself might be felt to be the truth.

In the prayers used after the people answer, Amen, the Priest speaketh thus; “We, who have received the pledge of eternal life, humbly beseech Thee to grant that we may receive by manifest participation that, which we touch under the image of the Sacrament."

Now a pledge and image are the pledge and image of some other thing; that is they do not respect themselves, but somewhat else. For a pledge is the pledge of that thing, for which it is given; an image is the image of that, the likeness whereof it sheweth forth. For they do not openly exhibit, but only signify those things, of which they are the pledge and the image. Wherefore, it followeth, that this Body and Blood are the pledge and image of some future thing, whereby that, which is now exhibited under a likeness, shall hereafter be openly revealed. Since then they now represent that, which shall hereafter be revealed, it followeth that that, which is now celebrated, is one thing, while that, which shall be revealed hereafter, is another.

Wherefore that, which the Church celebrateth, is both the Body and Blood of Christ; but yet as a pledge, as an image. The Truth we shall then possess, when pledge and image shall be no more, but the thing itself in verity shall appear.

And in another Prayer, "O Lord, we beseech Thee, let Thy Sacraments work in us, that which they contain; so that, what we now celebrate in figure, we may receive in very truth." He saith that these things are celebrated in figure, not in truth, that is, in the likeness, not by the exhibition of the thing itself. Now figure and truth differ from one another; wherefore the Body and the Blood, which is celebrated in the Church, differ from that Body and that Blood, which is acknowledged to be already glorified in Christ’s Body. This Body is the pledge and figure, but that is the truth itself. This will continue to be celebrated till we come to that other; but when we come to that Body, this shall be taken away.

It appeareth therefore that they differ as much from each other, as a pledge doth from that thing, of which it is given to us as the pledge, as much as an image doth from that thing, of which it is the image, as much as the figure doth from the truth. We see then that the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ, which is now received in the Church by the faithful, is separated by a wide difference from that, which was born of the Virgin Mary, which suffered, was buried, which rose again, which ascended into Heaven, which sitteth at the right hand of the Father. For that which is done on our journey, is to be spiritually received, because faith believeth that, which it seeth not; it spiritually feedeth the soul, and maketh the heart glad, and giveth everlasting life, and incorruption, while we look not upon that, which feedeth the body, which is pressed by the teeth, which is divided into parts, but upon that, which is spiritually received in faith. But that Body, in which Christ suffered and rose again, still existeth as His proper Body, which He took of the body of the Virgin Mary, which even after His resurrection could be handled and seen, as He Himself said to His disciples, “Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.”

Let us hear also what St. Fulgentius said in his book concerning faith. “Most firmly hold, and doubt not in any sort, that “the Only-Begotten Son, God the Word, when made Flesh, offered Himself for us, a sacrifice and oblation to God for a sweet-smelling savour. To Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, animals were sacrificed in the time of the Old Testament by Patriarchs, Prophets, and Priests, and to Whom now, that is, in the time of the New Testament, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, with Whom He hath one and the same Divinity, the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world ceaseth not to offer the sacrifice of Bread and Wine in faith and love. In those carnal victims there was a signification of the Flesh of Christ, which He without sin was to offer for our sins, and of that Blood, which for the remission of our sins He was to pour forth. Whilst in this sacrifice there is the thanksgiving, and commemoration of the Flesh of Christ, which He hath offered for us, and of the Blood, which He hath shed for us. Of which the Blessed Apostle Paul speaketh in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers to rule the Church of God, with He hath purchased with His own Blood.' In those sacrifices, therefore, what was to be given us was figuratively signified; but in this sacrifice what has already been given us, is evidently shewn."

When he saith, that in those sacrifices there was a signification of what should be given us, but in this sacrifice a commemoration of what has been given us, he clearly implieth, that, as the one had a figure of things to come, so this sacrifice too is a figure of things past.

By these words he most evidently sheweth, how great is the difference between the body, in which Christ suffered, and this Body, which is for the commemoration of His passion and death. For the one is His proper and true Body, and hath naught in it of

mystery or figure; the other is mystical, and sheweth one thing by a figure outwardly, while it representeth another thing inwardly through the understanding of faith.
Let me allege one other testimony of the Father Augustine, which will confirm what I have said, and conclude my discourse. In his sermon to the people concerning the Sacrament of the altar, he thus speaketh; What ye now see on the altar of God, ye saw also on the night that is past; but as yet ye have no heard what it is, what I meaneth, and of how great a thing it containeth the Sacrament. What ye see then, is the bread and the cup, which even your eyes declare to you; but the point in which your faith requireth instruction is this; that the bread is the Body of Christ, the cup is the Blood of Christ. This is but briefly stated, and it may suffice for faith, yet faith requireth instruction. For the Prophet saith, 'If ye will not believe, ye shall not understand.' Ye may therefore say to me, Thou hast bidden us to believe; explain that we may understand. A thought like the following may arise in some one's mind; We know whence our Lord Jesus Christ took flesh, from the Virgin Mary, He was suckled as an infant, He was nourished, He grew, He came to years of manhood, He suffered persecution of the Jews, He was hung on the tree, He was slain, He was taken down from the tree, He was buried, the third day He rose again, He ascended into heaven on the day He willed, thither He raised His own Body, thence He shall come to judge the quick and dead, there He now sitteth at the right hand of the Father. How then can the bread be His Body? and the cup, or what the cup containeth, how can it be His Blood? These, brethren, are called Sacraments for this reason, because in them one thing is seen, and another understood; that which is seen hath a corporeal nature, that which is understood, hath a spiritual fruit."
This venerable author, in these words, instructeth us what we ought to think of our Lord's proper Body, which was born of Mary, and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and in which He will come to judge the quick and the dead, and what of that, which is placed on the altar, and received by the people. The former is entire, is neither cut nor divided, nor veiled under any figure; the latter, which is set on the Lord's Table, is a figure, because it is a Sacrament: as it is outwardly seen, it hath a corporeal nature, which feedeth the body; as it is inwardly understood, it hath a spiritual fruit, which quickeneth the soul.
When he would speak somewhat more openly and clearly of this mystical body, he addeth the following words, "Wherefore if ye wish to understand the Body of Christ, hearken to the words of the Apostle, 'Ye are the Body and members of Christ.' If therefore ye are the Body and members of Christ, your own mystery is laid on the Lord's Table, ye receive your own mystery, ye answer, Amen, to that which ye are, and by so answering ye subscribe thereto. Thou hearest, The Body of Christ, and thou answerest, Amen. Be thou a member of the Body of Christ, that this Amen may be true. But why so in bread? Let us allege nought of our own, but let us hearken to the Apostle when he saith concerning that Sacrament, 'We being many are one bread and one body.'"

St. Augustine sufficiently teacheth us, that ,in the bread which is placed on the altar, the Body of Christ is signified, as well as the body of the people who receive, to the intent he might plainly shew Christ's proper Body to be that, in which He was born of the Virgin, in which he was suckled, in which He suffered, in which He died, in which He was buried, in which He rose again, in which He ascended into heaven, in which He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and in which He shall come to judgment. But that, which is placed on the Lord's Table, containeth the mystery of the Body, he also again it containeth the mystery of the body of believing people, as the Apostle testifieth, "We being many are one bread and one body in Christ."

Your wisdom, most illustrious Prince, may understand, that it hath been most clearly shewn, by the testimony of Holy Scripture, and the words of the Holy Fathers, that the bread, which is called the Body of Christ, and the cup, which is called the Blood of Christ, is a figure, because it is a mystery; and that the difference is not small between the Body, which existeth in mystery, and the Body, which suffered, died, and rose again. For the one is the proper Body of our Saviour; no figure, no hidden signification, but the manifestation of the reality itself is there acknowledged, and the vision of this believers still desire; for He is our Head, and with the vision of Him our desire shall be satisfied; inasmuch as He and the Father are One, not in respect of the Body, which the Saviour hath, but in respect of the fulness of the Godhead, which dwelleth in the Man Christ. But in this other, which is celebrated in a mystery, there is a figure not only of the proper Body of Christ, but also of the people that believe in Christ. For it beareth the figure of either body, that is, of the Body of Christ, which suffered and rose again, and of the people, who in Christ are born again and quickened from the dead.

Let us moreover add, that the bread and the cup, which is both called and is the Body and Blood of Christ, doth represent the memory of our Lord’s passion and death, as He said Himself in the Gospel, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” The Apostle Paul explaineth when he saith, “As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”

We are taught both by our Saviour, and by St. Paul the Apostle, that this bread and cup, which are placed on the altar, are placed there in figure or in memory of the Lord’s death, that they may recall to our present remembrance that which was done in times past, so that being put in remembrance of His passion, we may by it be made partakers of the heavenly gift, whereby we have been freed from death; knowing well that when we shall arrive at the vision of Christ, we shall have no need of such like instruments, to remind us what His boundless mercy hath endured for us. For we shall then see Him face to face, we shall not be reminded by the outward admonition of temporal things, but by the contemplation of the Truth itself shall see, how we ought to render thanks to the Author of our salvation.

Yet let it not be thought, from my saying this, that in the mystery of the Sacrament, the Body and Blood of the Lord are not received by the faithful, for faith receiveth that which

it believeth, not that which the eye beholdeth. It is a spiritual meat, and spiritual drink, spiritually doth it feed the soul, and giveth life, which shall satisfy for ever, as our Saviour saith Himself, when commending to us this mystery, “It is the Spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.”

In my desire to obey your Majesty’s command, I have presumed, though of slender powers, to dispute on a subject of no small importance. I have followed no presumptuous opinion of my own, but have had regard to the authority of the ancients. If you approve what I have said, as Catholic, ascribe it to the merit of your own faith, which disdained not to lay aside your kingly glory and magnificence, and to enquire from an humble subject an answer of truth. But if it please you not, ascribe it to my weakness, which hath failed sufficiently to explain that, which it desired.

Here endeth the Book of Ratramn on the
Body and Blood of the Lord.